

City of Santa Barbara

**CREEKS RESTORATION AND WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, November 8, 2006

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Creeks Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Program Citizens Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair DeVoe at 5:35 p.m. at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present

Myfanwy DeVoe (Chair)	Environmental/Land Use
Daniel E. Hochman	Hotel/Lodging Industry
Bruce Klobucher	Ocean Users
Michael Jordan (Vice Chair)	Business Community
Lee Moldaver	Environmental/Land Use
Jeff Phillips	Environmental/Land Use
David Pritchett	Environmental/Land Use
Daniel Wilson	Community at Large

Members Absent

George Weber	Environmental/Land Use
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Liaison Representatives Present

Beebe Longstreet	Park and Recreation Commission
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Liaison Representatives Absent

Rob Almy	County Project Clean Water Liaison
John Jostes	Planning Commission Liaison
Iya Falcone	City Council Liaison

Staff Present

Jill E. Zachary	Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager
Jeni Eddington	Creeks Program Assistant
Jill Murray	Water Quality Project Coordinator

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2006.

ACTION:

Moldaver moved, seconded by Hochman, and passed 8/0 that the Committee approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 13, 2006.

4. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Pritchett announced that Proposition 84 passed the statewide election. He said that this bond money will be used to funds water quality improvement projects and land conservation efforts.

Ms. Zachary thanked Daniel Wilson for speaking to neighbors about the importance of native plants at the San Roque Creek Stewards Project at Stevens Park.

Ms. Zachary announced that the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration Project Community Planting Day is tentatively scheduled for December 2, 2006.

Ms. DeVoe announced that Daniel Hochman received an award from the Antidefamation League.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. 5-Year Water Quality Report

Jill Murray, Water Resources Specialist, presented the 5-year Water Quality Monitoring Program report. She gave a brief review of the program and its goals. She said that the program is comprehensive and includes the monitoring of creeks, storm drains, lagoons, and the surf zone on a weekly and/or quarterly basis dependent on the specific location. She said that special projects and storms are also monitored.

Ms. Murray stated that the water quality monitoring goals are to determine the levels of pollutants or the state of water quality and to assess the efficacy of projects. She said that the purpose of the monitoring program is to identify needs, prioritize future projects, and provide the public with information about water

quality.

Ms. Murray said that the purpose of routine water quality assessment is to determine the extent of microbial contamination and better understand water quality for aquatic organism by measuring the temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity. She said baseline data is being accumulated to assess long term water quality trends.

Ms. Murray said that routine water quality assessment shows that indicator bacteria findings are highest in Mission Creek and lowest in Sycamore Creek. She said that the lowest indicator bacteria levels were found in the upper watershed and the highest values were found in the urban corridor. Ms. Murray stated that the analysis indicates day-to-day variability.

Ms. Murray said that dissolved oxygen and temperature are generally within the guidelines for *cold* species except that in lower Mission Creek and upper Arroyo Burro where dissolved oxygen is within the guidelines for *warm* species. She said that dissolved oxygen is consistently low in Laguna Channel. Ms. Murray said that turbidity is generally within the guidelines during the summer months but spikes during the rainy season.

Ms. Murray stated that it is recommended that the Creeks Division maintain routine watershed assessment, decrease the frequency of sampling, and sample at additional storm drains and potential “hot spots.”

Ms. Murray said that the purpose of project assessment is to determine whether installed projects result in improved water quality and habitat. She said that the Old Mission Creek Restoration at Bohnett Park is the only project that has both pre and post project data. Baseline data is being acquired for the Hope and Haley Diversion Projects, the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration, the Westside SURF Project, and the Las Positas Storm Water Management Project. She said that the monitoring results indicated that there are very low concentrations of most pollutants during the dry weather season. Ms. Murray said that dissolved metals, glyphosate, and pesticides were not detected and that the Hope drain had high concentrations of total metals. She said that hydrocarbons were detected in 10% of the samples.

Ms. Murray stated that the pollutants of concern in Santa Barbara creeks are dissolved copper, MBAS, oil and grease, sediment, and indicator bacteria. She said that dissolved copper is a frequent storm water pollutant of concern across the country. Ms. Murray noted that the toxicity of dissolved copper is unresolved and monitoring criteria is under revision.

Ms. Murray said that staff recommends 1) maintaining the storm-monitoring efforts, 2) reducing the focus of identifying pollutants of concern, and 3) focusing on identifying sources, routes, and fates of indicator bacteria in storm water using auto-samplers and flow gauges. She said that the toxicity of water containing high

levels of dissolved copper should be tested and the program should maintain flexibility.

Ms. Murray stated that the purpose of creek walks is to determine the types, locations, and numbers of physical sources of water pollution such as bank erosion. She said that the creeks are walked once a year and the amount of trash found in the creeks has decreased from 1999 to 2005.

Ms. Murray stated that the Water Quality Monitoring Program has provided a solid baseline for understanding water quality issues. She said that the seasonal and inter-annual variability of indicator bacteria values are better understood and hot spots for indicator bacteria and field parameters have been identified. She said that many potential constituents of concern during storm flow and dry flow conditions have been ruled out. Ms. Murray stated that the impact of the first flush rain event has been solidified and the microbial source tracking efforts have identified hot spots.

Ms. Murray stated that the general recommendation include the limiting of routine watershed monitoring, shift the emphasis toward source tracking, and participate in standardized data collection for storm water. She said that other recommendations include the use of GIS tools and watershed models and stay abreast of current developments in sediment quality objectives and pathogen testing.

Ms. Murray stated that the next steps include developing a specific monitoring plan for the coming year, developing cost estimates, and presenting recommendation to the Committee in February 2007.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Mr. Phillips stated that he believes that the monitoring program is on track.

Mr. Hochman asked if the reduction in trash is because of the weekly creek clean-ups or because of behavior modification.

- Ms. Zachary responded that the reduction in trash is likely due in part to the weekly creek clean-ups. She said that the Waterfront Department, Parks Division, and Urban Creeks Council have acknowledged that there is less debris in the lagoons.

Mr. Pritchett asked how the water quality report would be made public.

- Ms. Murray responded that the report would be posted on the Creeks Division website.
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Mr. Phillips stated that it would be helpful to compare the City's water quality report to other South Coast communities.

- Ms. Murray responded that it would be beneficial to compare data. She

also said that it is clear that indicator bacteria are climatically driven.

Mr. Jordan asked if it is realistic to see improvement at a project considering that there is a large upstream reach funneling pollutants downstream.

- Ms. Murray responded that the Old Mission Creek Restoration Project at Bohnett Park was not designed to reduce indicator bacteria concentrations.

Mr. Wilson asked if the byproducts or surfactants of glyphosate are being tested for. He asked if there is a relationship between the times of day that the samples are taken for dissolved oxygen. Mr. Wilson asked if there was a trend in trash reduction between the years of 1999 and 2005 or was there an abrupt change in the quantity of trash found in the creeks. He mentioned that the methodology used to collect the data may skew the numbers.

- Ms. Murray responded that the Water Quality Monitoring subcommittee opted to maintain sampling for glyphosate. She responded that the tests are taken at the same time each day and this is generally done in the morning.
- Ms. Zachary responded that staff will continue to monitor for glyphosate. She said that because it has not yet been detected does not mean that it is not present and the byproducts will be analyzed if it can be done accurately. Ms. Zachary responded that the same methodology for trash assessment was used in 1999 and 2005.

Mr. Hochman asked if the savings incurred by reducing routine monitoring will be significant enough to purchase flow gauges and auto-samplers.

- Ms. Zachary responded that staff resources and lab fees would be re-allocated.

Ms. DeVoe asked if low oxygen values are serious.

- Ms. Murray responded that she was pleased that there was not a lot of low dissolved oxygen.
- Ms. Zachary responded that dissolved oxygen is an example of urban activities affecting creek environments in a non-visual way.

Mr. Wilson recommended that the over-story riparian canopy vegetation be assessed in locations with low dissolved oxygen to promote restoration opportunities in those locations. He said that monitoring and data collection is valuable and aids in increasing support for investing in this type of information gathering. He said that he supports the use of automated samplers.

b. Proposed Fiscal year 2008 – 2013 Capital Program

Ms. Zachary said that the City operates on a two-year budget cycle and prepares a six-year Capital Program. She said that the purpose of the six-year Capital Program is to project capital project schedules, determine project milestones, and determine funding requirements. She said that the Capital Improvement Program will be adopted during the budget approval process.

Ms. Zachary said that when drafting the 6-year capital program, considerations included the progress and completion of major projects, grant funding opportunities, community and Committee input, upcoming State Ballot Initiatives, capital infrastructure replacement, staff resources, and opportunities for collaboration.

Ms. Zachary said that Capital Improvement Program funding includes money for project planning, conceptual/feasibility analysis, design, permitting, and construction. She said that the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration project will be complete in December and the Westside SURF, and the Hope Avenue and Haley Street Storm drain Diversion projects will be complete shortly which will free-up staff time.

Ms. Zachary said that the Las Positas Storm Water Management project is currently in the permitting and final design phase, and conceptual design is complete for the Old Mission Creek Storm Water Management project.

Ms. Zachary stated that Phase II of the Watershed Action Plans and installation of catch basin filters will begin in FY07. She said that the Las Positas Valley Restoration, the Lower Arroyo Burro Restoration, the Bacterial Reduction Program, the Laguna Channel SURF, and the Watershed Action Plan Implementation are all pending capital program projects.

Ms. Zachary stated that the purpose of the Las Positas Valley Restoration Project is to develop and implement a creek restoration project on six acres of City-owned land along lower Arroyo Burro. She said that the proposed Veronica Meadows residential development is also slated for that area so the Creeks Division may choose to use the funds to assess potential restoration locations downstream or upstream of the 6-acre parcel.

Ms. Zachary said that funds have been set aside to develop a restoration plan for the lower Arroyo Burro watershed. She said that this project has been placed on hold since the initiation of the Watershed Actions Plans. She said that the funds are intended to cover the cost of planning for the lower Arroyo Burro watershed or could be combined with the funds for the Las Positas Valley Restoration project implementation.

Ms. Zachary recommended that the Bacterial Reduction Program be further funded over the next several years. She said that monitoring and assessment data could be used to systematically reassess the watershed to determine additional sites for water quality improvement projects.

Ms. Zachary said that the funds currently set aside for the Laguna Channel SURF project will be used to assess the feasibility of the project. She said that benthic macro invertebrate and tidewater goby studies are complete and additional work may be necessary depending on the DNA-Microbial Source Tracking research

results.

Ms. Zachary recommended that the funds for Watershed Action Plan Implementation be used for the Watershed and Business Technical Assistance Program instead.

Ms. Zachary said that new capital programs include the Mission Creek and Sycamore Creek Watershed Restoration Projects, Invasive Plant Removal/Re-vegetation, and Capital Infrastructure Replacement. She said that the Sycamore Creek Watershed Restoration Project includes 1) the development of a watershed restoration plan, 2) the completion of conceptual designs and technical studies for priority projects, 3) assessing the availability of publicly owned land adjacent to the creek, and 4) developing plans concurrent with design and funding of bridge improvements. Ms. Zachary said that the Invasive Plant Removal/Re-vegetation Project would be addressed on a watershed bases and that funds would be set aside to develop these plans. She said that as capital infrastructure already installed will also need to be maintained and replaces, and funds are being set aside for that purpose as well.

Committee Comments:

Mr. Pritchett asked if the Arroyo Burro and Las Positas Valley projects are represented in the budget table.

- Ms. Zachary responded that the projects were not combined on the budget table but they are items numbered five and eight. Ms. Zachary indicated that the recommendation of the Budget subcommittee to combine the projects was noted in the staff report.

Mr. Jordan recommended that the Arroyo Burro and Las Positas Valley projects be combined in the budget table and that work be done to design a collaboration plan. He asked how projects get funded when anticipated grant funds are not received.

- Ms. Zachary responded that projects are presented to the Committee throughout the design process to determine whether or not they should be moved forward and to assess the funding. She said that reserves were used to fund the shortfall for the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration Project even though over \$800,000 in grant funds were received.

Mr. Wilson asked if members of the public can request funds for invasive plant removal projects along their stretch of the creek. He recommended that a mechanism be designed to fund private restoration projects. Mr. Wilson asked if there is a project proposed that would connect Laguna Channel to the Andree Clarke Bird Refuge.

- Ms. Zachary responded that an invasive plant removal strategic plan would be drafted on a watershed basis, and implemented on a project-by-project basis. Ms. Zachary responded that various City departments are beginning to define a Capital Program to begin implementation of the Tidewater Goby

Management Plan and restoration of Mission lagoon. She said that this project would likely take the Laguna Channel into consideration. She said that it is not in the Creeks Division budget but could be presented in the Parks and Recreation Department's budget.

Mr. Klobucher asked how grant funding timelines work. He asked if there is a connection between the capital program budget and staff requirements.

- Ms. Zachary responded that the best case scenario for the award and receipt of grant money would take several months and the worst case scenario would take years. She said the grant funds are listed in the budget at the point in which the City would be eligible to apply for the funds. Ms. Zachary responded that Creeks Division staff is funded from the operating budget, not the Capital Program budget.

Ms. DeVoe recommended that funds be reallocated from the Las Positas Valley 6-acre parcel to Laguna Channel and Mission Creek projects.

- Ms. Zachary responded that having visible projects that are enjoyed by the greatest number of people is a priority. She said that additional funding for the Las Positas Valley Restoration is not proposed until FY 2012. She said that if the projects were combined, \$500,000 would be available and she estimates that a lower Arroyo Burro restoration project would take many years to design and construct.

Public comment opened at 7:34 p.m.

Mr. John Hernandez stated that the 500 block of East Victoria floods each year because foliage clogs the creek. He said that he would be interested in receiving funds to remove the bamboo in that portion of the creek and improve the flow along that neighborhood block.

Public comment closed at 7:37 p.m.

c. Fiscal year 2006 Year End Report

Jordan moved, seconded by Hochman, and passed 8/0 that the Committee continue Item 7c to the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting.

8. STAFF REPORT

a. Manager's Program Update

Ms. Zachary reported that the Hope Avenue and Haley Street Storm Drain Diversion Projects have been constructed. She said that these storm drains have had pollution problems and can be used during the dry-weather wet-season.

Ms. Zachary reported that the Westside SURF has been constructed. She said that the ribbon cutting event will be held on December 13, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Zachary reported that the San Roque Creek Stewards Project Community Planting Day was a success with 55 people attending. She said that the project is funded in part by Santa Barbara Beautiful and the Creeks Division. She said that the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden also collaborated on this event.

Ms. Zachary reported that the Clean Water Business Certification Program has been launched. She said that postcards have been sent to the restaurant and automotive industries. The construction industry's postcard is in the design process.

Ms. Zachary reported that the creek name signs have been installed on City bridges that cross creeks. She said that additional locations are being sought and the Streets Division installed the signs.

Ms. Zachary reported that the League of Women Voters is sponsoring a forum luncheon on watershed planning and watershed issues on Wednesday, November 15th at Noon at the Louise Lowry Davis Center.

b. Tentative Meeting Agenda

Ms. Zachary reviewed the tentative meeting agenda.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:00 p.m. there being no further business to come before the Committee,

ACTION:

Hochman moved, seconded by Jordan and passed 8/0 that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill E. Zachary
Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager